

World TB Day

Kansas Tuberculosis Cases Decline In 2003 for First Time in 5 Years

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An almost 16 percent decline in active tuberculosis (TB) cases across Kansas occurred in 2003, marking the first decline in active cases in Kansas in the past five years, and highlighted some positive disease trends on World TB Day, March 24.

Annual observance of World TB Day is intended to raise awareness about the devastating consequences of TB. On March 24, 1882, Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of the TB bacillus, leading to the eventual designation of the World TB Day. The Centers for Disease Controls announced its goal in 1989 to eliminate TB from the United States by 2010.

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that is spread through the air when a person with active TB disease coughs or sneezes. Coughing and sneezing allows particles to be released into the air. Disease transmission occurs when a person inhales these expelled particles into their lungs. Only persons with active disease are capable of spreading Tuberculosis. Persons who inhale the particles that were released into the air may become infected with TB. It is reported that only 10 percent of the individuals infected with TB will actually develop TB disease.

Although it usually attacks the lungs, TB can also affect the brain, kidneys, intestines, eyes, bones, and joints. Its symptoms include a bad cough lasting longer than two weeks, shortness of breath, chest pains, fever, fatigue, and weight loss. TB is spread through the air in saliva droplets from an infected person. Prolonged close contact with someone who has TB, such as a family member living in the same home, can lead to infection. TB infection can lie dormant for 2-12 weeks before symptoms become apparent.

In Kansas during 2003, the state's major metropolitan areas were home to the most reported cases of tuberculosis. Sedgwick County reported the highest number of new cases of TB disease in 2003, with 30. Two metropolitan Kansas City, KS counties reported noteworthy caseloads during 2003: Johnson reported 14 cases, up from 12 in 2002, and Wyandotte reported 9 cases, down from 11 in 2002. Other Kansas counties reporting at least one case in 2003 include: Butler, Crawford, Douglas, Finney, Ford, Harvey, Kearney, Kingman, Lincoln, Lyon, Montgomery, Pottawatomie, Reno, Riley, Seward, and Wilson.

Fifty-nine cases were among males and 26 were among females. Of the state's 75 cases in 2003, 16 were among black, non-Hispanics; 18 were among Asians or Pacific Islanders; 19 were among white, non-Hispanics; and 19 were among white Hispanics. In 2003, three cases were reported in Kansas among children under the age of 14, as compared with eight cases in 2002. Ten cases were reported for the age group 15-24; 31 for the age group 25-44; 22 for the age group 45-64; and nine among individuals age of 65 and over. During 2003, there was one reported case of HIV co-infection.

Of the 30 new 2003 cases in Sedgwick County, the KDHE Tuberculosis Control Program directly linked four cases from the state of Missouri through DNA testing. Additional testing in three other cases has yet to establish a local connection, and maybe cases from other states.

TB can infect anyone but is more common in developing countries, where poor sanitation, cramped living conditions, and lower availability of medical care facilitate the spread of the disease. Statistics indicate It is not unusual for TB cases in Kansas and across the country to be linked to immigrant populations. For more information regarding KDHE's Tuberculosis Control Program, please log onto our Web site - <http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us/tb/index.html>